

72-4796

DD/S 72-3482

CONFIDENTIAL

16 August 1972

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Status of Secretaries

FROM : The Junior Officers' Study Group

1. Based upon informal interviews and discussions, we have concluded that many Agency secretaries are among the most dissatisfied CIA employees. Agency-wide attitudes which hold that secretaries are not professionals or even career employees have damaged their career progression, job mobility, and morale, and contributed to a high-turnover rate of CIA clerical and secretarial personnel. Too many Agency supervisors believe that secretaries are "office temporaries" -- to be treated as housekeepers, office wives, and "go-fors." These attitudes clearly make it difficult to retain competent secretaries and to encourage professionalism among them.

2. Obviously complaints differ widely from office to office. Not all bosses insist that their secretaries run personal errands, but we have heard complaints of boredom and insufficient responsibility from nearly all secretaries. Supervisors should try to give their secretarial and clerical personnel stimulating work and to parcel it out equitably.

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3. One major complaint is that there is little hope of shifting to a more challenging job. The recent personnel notice requesting candidates for senior secretarial assignments (24 May 1972) offers a good opportunity, but there appears to be no overall management system and very little concern for career development. More information should be made available to secretaries about other jobs for which they may be qualified, for example as research and intelligence assistants.

4. Agency sponsorship of selected qualified secretaries in non-clerical training should also be explored. Many would benefit

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from basic language and area studies programs. Basic management training would increase the Agency's reserve of semi-professionals and enable some secretaries to become office managers themselves.

5. In keeping with the US government's recent initiatives to improve the status of working women, we suggest the following as a partial solution to the above problems:

a. a clarification, perhaps in the form of an Agency-wide notice, of the correct secretary-supervisor relationship (Attached is a copy of the State Department Newsletter on this subject.),

b. a concerted effort to give qualified secretaries some non-clerical training to assist them in their present jobs or to enable them to fill more challenging jobs,

c. the establishment of a secretarial career development service on an Agency-wide or Directorate-wide basis.

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SUPERVISORS CAN HELP

To Improve the Status of Secretaries

Secretaries have long suffered from what one might call the "reliable old shoe" syndrome—too often considered the indispensable workhorses of the office while somehow never gaining the status career professionals deserve.

In keeping with the new policy of State, AID and USIA to improve the status of women employees, the Office of Women's Affairs held a series of meetings in December to discuss the "secretary's lot."

Representatives from both Civil Service and Foreign Service secretarial categories attended the sessions in which various aspects of the secretary-supervisor relationship were dissected, analyzed and commented upon.

Particularly revealing was the prevalence of outmoded attitudes towards the secretarial vocation which are out of step with the developing favorable climate for professional women in the 1970's.

Observations made during the meetings were developed into the following statements which describe the type of consideration and respect secretarial employees can and should expect from the supervisory level.

Secretaries are:

First and Foremost Professionals.

- Encourage their independent thought, decision-making, and activity.
- Do not condescend or otherwise assume them to have disabling intellectual limitations.
- Be aware of their role as colleagues who desire to improve their status via promotion and recognition of performance—the same as officers.

Secretaries are:

Professionals with Skills—Make Use of Them.

- If you are a supervisor who drafts everything, try dictating instead. Secretaries learn this skill for your benefit, and like a foreign language it can't be maintained at a professional level unless practiced.
- Recognize and use the secretary's extensive technical and general knowledge by seeking and welcoming suggestions.

Secretaries are:

Individuals with Private Lives Outside the Office.

- Distribute work—particularly that of routine nature—*evenly throughout the day*. Secretaries, too, may have families at home, dinner plans or tickets to the symphony which preclude overtime every evening.
- Be certain the work for which you have called in the duty secretary is truly of an emergency nature—or could it wait until the next workday?
- Give your secretary the same courtesies and options in planning vacations or personal leave which are afforded other professionals.

Secretaries are not:

Housekeepers, Office Wives or "Go-fers."

- Keep your work area in order. Secretaries should not have to assume the role of unpaid char help.
- Do not expect a secretary to run your personal errands—she has more than enough of her own!
- Do not require a secretary to "gofer" coffee, cigarettes, newspapers, breakfast, lunch, etc. If she volunteers, treat it as a favor to be returned sometime.

Secretaries are not:

Omniscient Mindreaders.

- Assist a secretary's transition she is new to the organization post. Insure an effective orientation program including written or oral guidance from predecessor.
- When dictating: Organize what you want to in *advance*—don't waste time and yours by skipping for one disjointed thought to other. Enunciate! A secretary can't interpret mumbles resulting from talking with a cigar, cigarette pipe or pencil in your mouth or even more disconcerting with your back to her while playing with the adding machine.
- Be candid—*early*—about a secretary's weaknesses. As a professional, she will want to correct them. Her enthusiasm will dilute, however, if the first notice of something amiss is through a derogatory efficiency report.

In view of the reform-oriented nature of these statements, the Office of Women's Affairs (M/WA, Room 4253, N.S.) would welcome comments from employees at all levels in the foreign affairs agencies.

—Gladys P. Ro
Special Assis
For Women's Aff
For the Deputy U
Secretary for Managen



This is an interesting and
Challenging proposal from the
Junior Officers' Study Group.
Also, please read the perceptive
Comments from Ellen and Peg.

Since WEC's routing sheet
is addressed to both DD/L and
Dir/Pers, I assume he wants
to discuss with you simultaneously.
You might want to have
Harry discuss with you
before you see WEC. Therefore,
I suggest the following comment
be added to the yellow routing
sheet: "1 to 2:

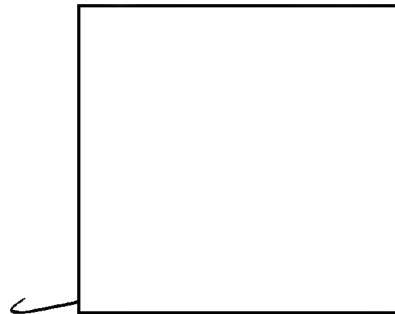
Let's you & I discuss this
before we make an
appointment with WEC.



see note

- note att -

What's your
reaction to this?



Please return the
attached to me -

NOTE:

My reaction to this study is one of enthusiasm and encouragement. The fact that "secretaries are among the most dissatisfied CIA employees" has gone too long unrecognized.

Some of the blame must fall on secretaries, themselves, for many of us consider our jobs as "holding actions" until children are born, husbands are transferred, etc. A secretary's perception of her role has been influenced by such attitudes until we have helped box ourselves into this image. But now that outside society is struggling with a more equal position for women, the Agency needs to face the problem as well.

I think Mr. Colby's suggestion for a Women's Advisory Panel is an excellent one and believe that the inclusion of lower-graded women would greatly increase the validity of such a Panel. I think the suggestion that "more information should be made available to secretaries about other jobs" is one that should be implemented without further delay.

There's a phrase in para 1 of the memo which states what I think should be the goal of this whole exercise: "to encourage professionalism among them" -- and this to be accomplished not by half-hearted, placating measures, but by a genuine effort to help secretaries take pride in themselves as the professionals many have the potential to be.


8 Sept 72

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To Mr.

I can honestly say that I am not in the category which indicates "that many Agency secretaries are among the most dissatisfied CIA employees". I am not dissatisfied. I consider myself lucky that I have enjoyed my work and have had great bosses - so far! I do not feel that I have ever been imposed upon or treated as a "housekeeper, an office wife, or a go-for". As yet I have not been bored and, in view of the fact that I have to work, I prefer being a secretary (my "retirement" employment will be another matter!). I think I have been given a reasonable amount of responsibility in my career so no complaints here. Although I am interested in advancement, I have no interest in a field other than secretarial.

In view of the above, my comments are:

re 5.a.: No strong feeling about this. It would be interesting and, for those not as lucky as me, it might "help" or correct unhappy situations.

re 5.b.: I think this is a good idea for those dissatisfied secretaries. This would probably result in improved office atmospheres and relationships within an office. (People who like their work are nicer to be around.)

re 5.c.: I'm not sure I understand what this actually means, how it would work, what it would accomplish -- I thought we now had a Panel-type system in the Career Service which involves or coordinates with other Career Services in the other Directorates. However, a separate Career Service might assist in recognition for those secretaries who seem to be "hiding".

p.

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OFFICIAL ROUTING SLIP			
DD / S R E G I S T R Y			
F I L E <i>Training 3-2</i>			
TO	NAME AND ADDRESS	DATE	INITIALS
1	<i>D/Pers Mr. Fisher</i>		
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ACTION		DIRECT REPLY	PREPARE REPLY
APPROVAL		DISPATCH	RECOMMENDATION
COMMENT		FILE	RETURN
CONCURRENCE		INFORMATION	SIGNATURE
Remarks:			
<i>Harry -</i> <i>After you've had a</i> <i>chance to read let's</i> <i>talk before going to Exhin.</i>			
FOLD HERE TO RETURN TO SENDER			
FROM: NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NO.			DATE
			<i>11 SEP 1972</i>
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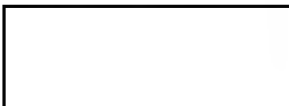
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DD/S 72-3482: Blind Memo dtd 16 Aug 72 fr The Junior Officers' Study Group,
subject: The Status of Secretaries

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TO	NAME AND ADDRESS		DATE	INITIALS	
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Remarks:					
<p>Could we discuss? I'd be particularly interested in a possible Women's Advisory Panel to consider some of these matters and to serve as a channel of communication (both ways).</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;">  WEC </div>					
FOLD HERE TO RETURN TO SENDER					
FROM: NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NO.					DATE
Executive Director-Comptroller					6 Sep 72
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TRANSMITTAL SLIP		DATE 13 Aug 72
TO: Mr. Colby (through)		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	
REMARKS:		
<p>This is the study group's most recent effort. I think it addresses an unusual topic, but an important one. I hope its recommendations make sense to you.</p> <p>As usual we are sending copies to our immediate bosses, the MAG, the IG, Mr. Cunningham, and others (such as the Personnel officials) who might be especially interested.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 350px; height: 100px; margin-top: 10px;"></div>		

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1 FEB 55REPLACES FORM 36-8
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